

(i) said cellulose triacetate compound has carboxyl groups wherein at least part of the carboxyl groups are free carboxyl groups;

(ii) said cellulose triacetate compound contains at least one member selected from the group consisting of an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an alkali metal salt of said acid, and an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid; and

(iii) said cellulose triacetate compound contains an alkali metal or an alkaline earth metal, wherein the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose triacetate is  $5.5 \times 10^{-6}$  equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent,

wherein said cellulose triacetate compound is soluble in an organic solvent.

2. (four times amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 1 having at least feature (iii), wherein the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose triacetate is  $2.5 \times 10^{-6}$  equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent.

3. (four times amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 2, wherein the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose acetate is  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent.

4. (four times amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 1 having at least feature (ii), wherein the acid has a pKa value of 2.0 to 4.4.

5. (four times amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 1 having at least feature (ii), wherein the acid of feature (ii) is at least one organic acid selected from the group consisting of an aliphatic monocarboxylic acid, an aliphatic polycarboxylic acid, a hydroxycarboxylic acid, and an amino acid.

6. (four times amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 5, wherein the acid of feature (ii) is at least one organic acid selected from the group consisting of a saturated or unsaturated C<sub>1-3</sub> monocarboxylic acid, a saturated or unsaturated C<sub>2-4</sub> dicarboxylic acid, a C<sub>1-6</sub> hydroxycarboxylic acid, and an amino acid.

7. (four times amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 6, wherein the acid of feature (ii) is at least one member selected from the group consisting of formic acid, haloacetic acid, halopropionic acid, acrylic acid, malonic acid, succinic acid, glutaric acid, fumaric acid, glycolic acid, lactic acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, and citric acid.

8. (four times amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 1 having at least feature (ii), wherein the total content of the acid of feature (ii), the alkali metal salt of the acid, and the alkaline earth metal salt of the acid is  $1 \times 10^{-9}$  to  $3 \times 10^{-5}$  mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose triacetate.

9. (four times amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 8, wherein the total content of the acid of feature (ii), the alkali metal salt

I  
H2  
concd  
of the acid, and the alkaline earth metal salt of the acid is  $1 \times 10^{-8}$  to  $2 \times 10^{-5}$  mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose triacetate.

10. (four times amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 9, wherein the total content of the acid of feature (ii), the alkali metal salt of the acid, and the alkaline earth metal salt of the acid is  $1 \times 10^{-7}$  to  $1 \times 10^{-5}$  mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose triacetate.

H3 Sub I  
11. (thrice amended) A cellulose triacetate composition comprising the cellulose triacetate compound of Claim 1 in the form of a slurry, wherein the slurry has a pH of 4.5 to 5.5.

H4 Sub I  
12. (four times amended) A cellulose triacetate composition according to Claim 11, wherein the slurry has a pH of 4.8 to 6.0.

H5 Sub I  
13. (thrice amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 1, wherein the average degree of acetylation is from 58 to 62.5%.

H6 Sub I  
15. (thrice amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 1, wherein the cellulose as a raw material is at least one member selected from the group consisting of a wood pulp and a linter pulp.

H7 Sub I  
16. (four times amended) A cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 15, wherein the cellulose as a raw material is at least one member selected from the group consisting of a hardwood pulp and a softwood pulp.

17. (four times amended) A method of producing a cellulose triacetate compound claimed in Claim 1, which comprises:

(i) mixing a cellulose triacetate, and an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water or the metal salt thereof, to give a slurry pH of 4.5 to 6.0;

(ii) treating a cellulose triacetate with said acid or said metal salt thereof to give a slurry pH of 4.5 to 6.0; or

(iii) adding an alkali metal salt of said acid or an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid to a cellulose triacetate, such that the total content of said alkali metal and said alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose triacetate is  $5.5 \times 10^{-6}$  equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent, to give a slurry pH of 4.5 to 6.0.

18. (twice amended) A dope containing the cellulose triacetate compound according to Claim 1 and an organic solvent.

20. (thrice amended) A method for improving the releasability of a film from a support which comprises casting a dope of Claim 18 on the support.

22. (twice amended) A method of producing a cellulose triacetate according to Claim 17, which comprises treating a cellulose with acetic acid, acetylating with a reactant consisting essentially of acetic anhydride in the presence of a sulfuric acid catalyst to produce a cellulose triacetate, and hydrolyzing or aging the cellulose triacetate using sulfuric acid as a catalyst.

✓  
**Add new claims 23:**

~~23. (new) A dope according to Claim 18, wherein said organic solvent comprises a halogenated hydrocarbon.~~

*Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the amended claims.*